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EDITORIAL

The name of the *Queens'* literary magazine has been changed from *logos* to *Signet*. The magazine had been named *logos* in the sense of "the word or outward form by which an inward thought is expressed." However, the definitions "the Word of God," or the "rational principle in the universe," are so much in the ascendency over the meaning intended, that the staff eventually found it necessary to select a new name.

We looked for a name that would both be suitable to *Queens*, and for a literary magazine as such; a word unlikely to develop diverse meanings, and we eventually decided on *Signet*.

Since it is common knowledge that rulers have customarily used their signets as stamps or seals of approval on letters and documents, and since all of the material included in the literary magazine has had the staff's approval, the name *Signet* seems doubly apropos to the board members and to the college. We hope that it will continue to seem so, over the years, and become traditional in a third and associative meaning: quality.

M. E. W.

Paris In The Summer

—Those strange trees
With pale green leaves
That grow in the courtyard of the Ile Saint-Louis,

When the leaves fall down
So you can't hear a sound,
Even if you listen with your ear to the ground!

The only one
Who turned to look
As I passed was a woman with a purple-bound book,

Who sat in the sun
Languidly
On a weathered wooden bench by a sifting tree.

Some other people
Strolled in the shade
Walking fuzzy poodles, and children played,

Their heads bent together,
Some quiet game
Down on their knees in a cobblestone lane.

On a bridge above the Seine
To the city noise
A Fiat raced past me filled with shouting boys;

A nun on a motorcycle
Just went by,
Her habit flapping and her wimple awry.

A man wheeled a bathtub
Behind him on a cart
In the middle of the street, to the taxi horns' start.

A woman dressed in black
On a corner of the square
Poked a twisted stick at pigeons flocking there.

A man selling books
Shook his finger at a child,
But when she scampered off he looked around and smiled.

His green bookstall
Stands above the quay;
A student sat against it writing postcards on his knee,

Where outside a pet shop
A sidewalk zoo
Has a mynah bird that calls *Bonjour* across the avenue,

And blinking back at rabbits
A little girl with braids
Curled her slender fingers round the bars of their cage,

And baskets of shells
From the Côte d'Azur
Blended all their colors into shades of lavender.

Shadows now were crouching
In corners everywhere
And swayed above the ferns in a marble jardiniere;

Leaves moving slightly
Foretold evening calm;
From high across the river came the bells of Notre-Dame

And brought the centuries with them
In old streets of the town,
Where all of us could hear them as the night came down.

SHERYL OWENS

Mum Essie

Linda Folk

Every day the dark green, 1950 Cadillac stopped in front of the entrance to the park, and the hulking figure of Mumessie slid out, slammed the door, and plunged down the hill to the shouts of the waiting children. Her big, black body seemed hardly capable of moving, much less runnning, but Mumessie was an agile creature, and as she herself said, "Only one layer o' al' dis meat is fat; des' others is solid muscle an' bone!" If any stranger had a side view of her as she ran down the hill, his eyes would widen, and his mouth would open in the certainty that the big colored woman would topple down the hill any second and roll into all those white children below. But, in spite of all the weight in front of her, Mumessie never fell over, and when she heard the children's yells of "Yea, here she comes!" and "Hurry up, Mumessie! We been waitin' for ya!" her white, teethy grin would burst its corners and she would pound the ground all the harder with her giant blue P.F. Flyers in her eagerness to get into the game.

There was always some dissention over the question of whose side she would play on, but with her easy-going, gentle ways, Mumessie quickly made peace in the group, and to keep everything fair her team always went first in field. Today, as the members of her team ran out yelling, "I got first base!" or "I got short-stop!" Mumessie went straight to her unchallenged position of pitcher and took her major league stance and expression as she waited on the mound. Whenever Mumessie was present, the game was played in complete seriousness, and no hanky-panky or trivial arguments caused any turmoil, for she had a way of settling everything so that no one's feelings were hurt.

"Batter up!" she shouted, and tiny Timmy Stone came to the plate. "How's ya wan'em today, Timmy?"

"Jus' not over my head, Mumessie," called Timmy, who was used to holding the bat over his shoulders and swinging over his head. Mumessie was about the only one who could get the ball down on Timmy's level and not have it rolling across the ground. She let loose with a low pitch to the inside, but Timmy swung at it anyway and hit a high pop right back to her side.

"I'se got it! I'se *got* it!" she cried as she ran under the ball and hustled over to tag little Timmy, who, laughing gleefully, started to run the other way as soon as he saw the huge figure coming for him.

"I'se gotcha! Give up, Timmy; you's out!" she giggled as she tagged him, and then added, "You's hit one of da highest flys I'se ever seed, Timmy! Almost put my eyes out tryin' to see where'd go! You's gonna be in the big leagues yet!"

Embarrassed about his out, but pleased over Mumessie's compliment, Timmy, head lowered, skipped back to his team as Anna Jane came to bat. Anna Jane timidly picked up a large bat and took a stiff, awkward stance too far away from the batter's box. She held the heavy bat so near the bottom that her thin wrists could not support its weight and the bat waggled each time she started to swing. With two strikes against her, Anna Jane's teammates impatiently began to yell, "Aw, come on Anna Jane; *try!*" "Watch the ball when you swing at it; don't close your eyes!" or "We already got one out, so *do* something!"

"Honey, don'tcha listin' to 'em. You can hit as well as the next 'en; all you needs is a littler bat, and to choke up some on your grip," Mumessie encouraged her,—so Anna Jane ran over to get another bat. "Now you's gonna hit me one!" And, sure enough, Anna Jane hit a nice, rolling foul over to third base. In her confused excitement she ran all the way to first base, oblivious of her team's provoked shouts to "Come back, Anna Jane! It's a *foul!*"

As Anna Jane, eyes on the ground, hurried back to position, Mumessie, who was conveniently standing near the baseline, said, "You's doin' all right now, and you's gonna do even better next time, I know. That last 'en was a good solid hit!" Anna Jane smiled thankfully up at Mumessie as she got ready for her next pitch. Mumessie carefully threw a slow but outside pitch to her and Anna Jane only tipped it, sending the ball straight to Mumessie. Mumessie, in pretended confusion, scooped around the sand several times and finally tossed the ball to first base just after Anna Jane pounced on the bag.

"Way to go, Anna Jane! Yea, Anna Jane; we *knew* you could!" members of the team yelled to the beaming, curly-headed girl on first.

"All right, now; ya'll better watch out! One of you's got by me, but I ain't gonna let no mo'!"

The other team laughed. "No, we're gonna beat'cha today!"

"Yeah, that's what *you* think!" called Jamie Griffin. "We got Mumessie, and nobody can beat *her!*"

Sure enough, Mumessie struck out the other team, after they had got several runs. Before all her team could run in from the field, several of the children gathered around her and began to yell, "I wanna bat first!" or "No, you'll strike out; let Buddy bat first 'cause he always hits a homer!" "I hardly *ever* get to bat: let *me* go first today! *Please,* Mumessie!" "No, Mumessie! He can't hit good!"

Mumessie looked sternly at the kids. "Now ya'll knows how we bats 'round here; we goes by the order of the rules—first base first, then second, and third,—and ya'll hurry up an' line up. We's wastin' time, and I'se got to go soon if you's gonna stand 'roun here squabblin'!"

"No, Mumessie, not yet! Please stay! We'll 'member what you told us."

"Stephen, you're first. So hurry up 'fore Mumessie leaves," Stuart whispered. The children hurriedly got into batting order, and Mumessie, affectionately surrounded by her team, waited on the grass.

"Mumessie, can't you stay longer today and tell us a story after the game like you did once?" Ruthie pleaded.

"Well . . . I . . . naw, honey. I guess I gots to go home. I'd sure like to stay here, you-all's so sweet, but I gots to try to do sump'in for that family of mine."

"*Please,* Mumessie!" several asked.

"No, sugar, jus can't today. I'se got children of my own who got to eat, even if that's all they do 'roun' the house."

"Oh, please, Mumessie; just a short one? Your children won't mind!"

"Well . . . yeh, I'se sure they won't miss me 'less it's *supper* time. If ya'll

hurry up and get to bat maybe we's got time for a short 'en.—Law, Stoort, you 'bout to miss your bat! Hurry up, boy, or we's not even gonna get through with this game 'fore dark!"

Stuart jumped up and leapingly ran over to the bat with the cheers of his team behind him. "Hurry up, ya'll! Mumessie's gonna tell us a story when we get through!" he yelled out to field. The team in field immediately jumped up and down, clapped their hands and yelled, *"Yea,—Mumessie!"*

Sooner than usual the game was over, and the clay-colored, sweaty little children pulled Mumessie over to the bench under the old oak tree. The late afternoon breeze from the bayou soon cooled them, and with children gathered about her feet, holding on to her skirt, and falling out her lap, Mumessie began her story. "Once upon a time, dere was dese two lil' boys, and dey's always wantin' to play and never do no work, and dey's got dis bea-u-ti-ful sister who love dem very much, but dey always go off and leave her with all de work to do. One day . . ."

The sun changed from yellow to pink and the trees from green to black, and soon all the children were reluctantly pulled away by the calls of their parents. For a while Mumessie sat alone under the trees watching the people in the park hop into their cars or onto their bikes and head home for supper. She looked down at her new P.F. Flyers that were admired by all the kids, and thought about going home to her family.

Unaware that anyone was left in the park, Mumessie did not see a sun-tanned girl coming toward her until she heard, "Hi, Mumessie!"

"Hi there, honey! Where you an' that pup of yours been today?—you's wasn't sittin' out here like you usually is?"

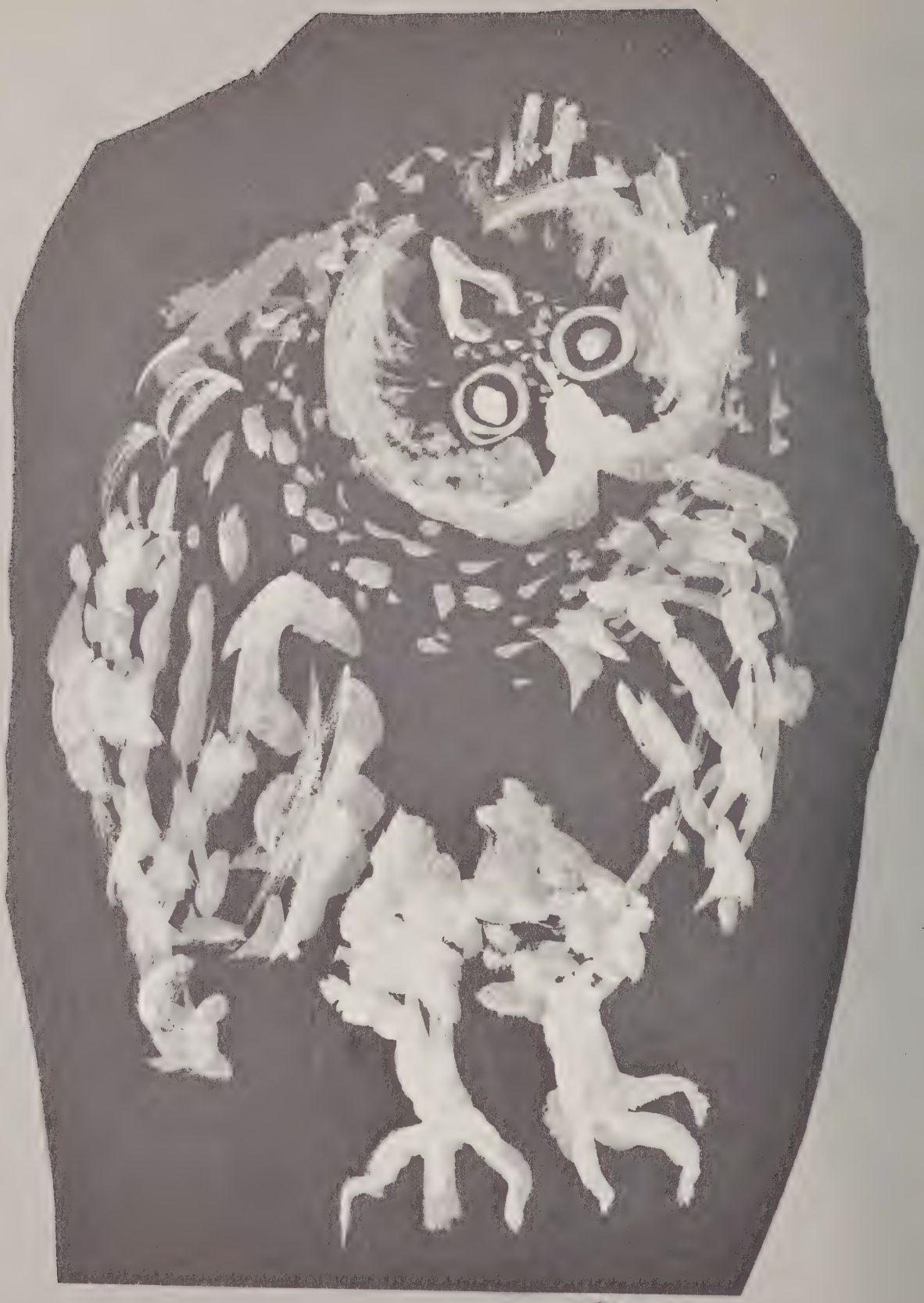
"Well, we went over to the Gulf today to see my cousins, and just got back, but I thought I'd have time for a quick walk, anyway. But what you doin' here, Mumessie?—you've usually left long before now! Thought you always had to leave and take care of that family of yours?"

Mumessie frowned and said, "Yes, well, I'se tired and I thought I'se due a lil' rest from that mob of mine back home. All the time fussin' and arguin'; I jus' don' know what to make of 'em! I'se jus gettin' sick a listin' to their squabblin'; they don't pay no mind to me nohow! Lot they 'preciate me workin' to the bone for 'em! Yeah,—lot they 'preciate me!"

Titans Piazza

Thinking to warn her before she was in too deep,
Or up too far in the mountains above the town,
And knowing her autumn ambition to climb a steep
And treacherous bank, scarlet with maple and brown
With oak, but mostly gold with elm and birch,
Her neighbors told her how the mountains had come
Locked in tons of glacial ice. A search
Of them had turned up several cumbersome
Tracks of a dinosaur, locked up in stone.
The mountainside was loose with shale, they said,
And wished if she *would* go there she would not go alone.
But halfway up Titans Piazza she knew past dread
That the danger was not so much in a loosened boulder
As in misjudging how far she could trust it to hold her.

SHERYL OWENS



Two Poems For Queens College

ADVANTAGE

Because John Milton rose at four,
His passion burning
For all those books in which he found
Prodigious learning;
For every poet, every sage
His works are built on:
I too think wise to early rise—
And study Milton.

NOVEMBER CAMPUS

How many other students now like these
In Lady Chapels under pillar trees
Where bushes lift the votive cups of fall,
Stoop to pick up the reddest leaf of all—

Or the most amber, leaded with such veins
As never hold together little panes
In Chartres, or any window of the world!
Tomorrow, on their desks, it will be curled

Uncolored, next a theme, or else a book.
But now they hold it to the light, and look
At every freckle darkened by the sun—
"Wait, Cathie! Here's an even *better* one!"

Their steps are formal, not like those of spring,
For autumn, fastening over everything,
On shoulders unconcerned as theirs has cast
The burden of the fallen, falling past.

Roberta T. S. Chalmers

The Pet

Martha Winders

"Stephanie Hightower!—get away from that lake!" boomed the voice gun. But Stephanie didn't move. Her muscles tensed; she waited for the right moment, and then swished her homemade net through the water toward the salamander.

"Oh, shucks, I missed . . ." she lamented, as she watched me coming toward her.

"Stephanie," I said, "You know you're not supposed to come down to the lake without a counselor!"

"Then will you stay with me?" she pled. "All I wanna do is catch a salamander,—just *one* . . . ! oh, please!"

"All right then. But Stephanie,—remember to always come and get me or another counselor before you come down! I'll be glad to come. It's deep here, and if one of us falls in, we need somebody along to pull us out! O. K.?"

So about four times a day Stephanie appeared on the porch of my cabin. She cocked her head to one side, and her blue eyes sparkled from under her thick, permanent-dried auburn hair. "Hey, will you go to the lake with me to catch a little 'ole salamander?" she asked, her freckled face wrinkling in a smile. "It'll only take a minute!"

I would agree to go, and she would bound down to the lake with her net and "pokin'-stick" waggling behind. She would be lying flat in the mud, with her arm shoulder-deep in water, by the time I got there. After our first week of teamwork, Stephanie had caught about fourteen salamanders. "You see," she explained, "I love salamanders! They're so *sweet,* and I've never had a pet before. I think fourteen's enough for right now, though. I don't want their can to get too *crowded.*"

One afternoon, about a week later, as I passed Stephanie's cabin, she called excitedly, "Hey, look what *I* found!" A bird's nest was balanced up on the rafter under the light. "We watched, and the mother bird didn't come back for ten whole minutes. I just couldn't let 'em *die,* so I just brought the eggs in to keep 'em all nice and warm."

"When did you find the nest, Stephanie? The mother probably just had to go a long way to get something to eat, and of course she would have come back!"

"Well anyway—I found 'em this mornin'. You see, my salamanders kept dying, and my counselor made me put 'em back. I just can't understand why they died. I changed the water every day, like you said. *Now* they won't let me get any more salamanders out of the lake! So anyway, I have some eggs! I just know they'll hatch!" she beamed.

Later that day I heard a shriek from Stephanie's cabin, and rushed up there to find Stephanie picking eggshells out of red and yellow goo on the floor. "They fell off! They fell off! I was just lookin' at 'em and they fell *off!*" she sobbed.

The comparative quiet of the next few days was soon broken by excited screams, and Stephanie yelling, "Look, I've found a pet,—I've found a *real* pet this time!" She was trying to stop a fast-moving ring-necked snake by beating it with a stick. I picked up the limp bleeding creature.

"Stephanie, let's put it in a big can in the shade, with grass and leaves. It's hurt now; it needs rest." She scurried off, but the snake had died by the time she got back. Stephanie was inconsolable, and all I could do was help her decorate a small box to bury the snake in.

Not more than a few days went by before Stephanie again came up to me with that shining face that could only mean disaster. I've got a secret to show you!—come *on!*" she whispered. We stopped, first, by the dining hall to get our afternoon mail, and to see what table we were assigned to for the coming week. Stephanie's face had darkened when she came back from the mailbox. "I didn't get any mail again. I haven't gotten even

one letter since I've *been* here—for *five whole weeks!*" She ran to look at the table lists, and her face fell still more. "I've been here for three whole summers—ever since I was five,—and I haven't gotten to sit at Miss Lil's or Miss Katie's table *yet!*"

"Maybe you can sit at one of the directors' tables next week," I answered.

"That's what they've been telling me every week, for three years, and I *never* do! I just don't understand it! Everybody *else* gets to sit at their tables!"

"Let's go see the secret, now," was all I could think to say.

I followed her down the hill from the dining hall and across the log bridge that went over the creek in the meadow. We went up to a hydrangea bush by the campfire circle, and when Stephanie moved the branches, what had looked for a second like a ball of fluff became three wide, yellow mouths. Stephanie's face radiated as she whispered, "I'm going to take one home for a pet!"

"Stephanie,—its mother will miss it. You *can't* take it away from its mother!"

"But she's got *two* other babies, and I don't have *any!*" she answered desperately.

"Yes, but she'll still miss it, and it needs her; probably it couldn't live without her."

"But, I'll love it, and feed it, and take *real* good care of it!"

"I know, Stephanie, but the mother bird knows exactly how much to mash up the food, and what the babies eat at different ages. We don't know these things."

"Well, I could take all the babies, and the mother, and put them in a cage, and let the mother go in and out and get the food, then—couldn't I?"

"She'd be afraid, and she wouldn't come back."

Stephanie walked over and sat down near the bridge. "But people are smarter than birds. I'd know what to feed it," she said reflectively.

"There's so much people don't know, Stephanie." I picked a blade of grass and handed it to her. "Look at a piece of grass. We don't even know what makes that live, or how it grows!"

She didn't say anything for what seemed a long time.

"I've got to go. It's getting pretty close to supper time. Coming?"

She shook her head no.

So I walked away, slowly, crossed the bridge, and went on up the hill. When I looked back Stephanie was still standing there facing the bush. Suddenly she turned, and holding the grass blade tightly, ran to catch up with me, and took my hand. "Well anyway," she said, "I have *you!*"

Billy Jim

Billy Jim, why you lookin' so sad these days?
Don't know, don't care.
Billy Jim, why don't you never smile no more, like you did
when we was young?
I jest can't tell you why—don't know . . .
Billy Jim, you just gonna sit here the rest o' your days,
sit here and mope around like a sick pup?
Most likely I'll be doin' just that.
Man, you're dyin' every day, just not carin' no more. Why, Billy?
Don't care no more, wife, cause you never cared to start with.
I did, Billy Jim, I cared all along.
But it weren't for me, wife! It weren't for us . . .
You cared for you so much, you done scorched me out long ago.

Carole Cameron

The Way

Linda Folk

For many days he came to the park, set up his easel and stool on the willow-shaded point that jutted out into the bayou, and began to paint the huge old houses that loomed over the water and were surrounded by magnolias, camellias, azaleas, and their age. He delighted in being out again, feeling the sunshine on his back gently soak through his skin, and the bayou breeze gently ruffle his thick hair. The office had stifled him, depressed him, and limited him in his thinking and acting, because he detested the impersonality that consumed his talk, his work and finally his whole life. His draft board, drawing instruments, and at last architecture itself had become repulsive to him, until it was with dread, each morning, that Mark entered the firm which had once been *J. W. Randolph, Real Estate & Architecture,* but had changed immediately to *Randolph & Son, Real Estate & Architecture,* after his graduation. His father, insisting that Mark would soon get "this art-kick out of his blood once and for all," did

not cancel the *& Son,* afterwards. But Mark had no intention of ever going back into the business of architecture, even if he couldn't do well in art. He would just find something else to do.

Mark looked across the bayou and automatically measured the proportions of the white gabled houses, and exactly reproduced them on his canvas. His high school teacher had suggested he take up painting in college, but on account of planning to be an architect since he'd been old enough to know what his father meant by the word, he had never seriously considered her suggestions—only daydreamed about them. As a result he had taken a few art courses besides those required for architecture—and regretted not taking more in painting. He would learn through practice, he thought.

Now that summer was near, boats and skiers appeared all over the bayou, and Mark in the languor of his new freedom often stopped his painting or sketching to watch the boats and riders dash in and out of the sparkling sprays of water. He noticed a tiny bird that flew to a dipping, hook-shaped branch of a willow, and balanced itself in the sway of the limb. The shine of the sun on its sleek, purple-blue feathers and the light way the small bird swung with the delicate branch, brought his attention back to his painting, and he squinted his blue-green eyes to look across the glare on the bayou. "I should like to get that on my canvas!" he thought, as he looked away from the bird and back to the precision of his painting. "But landscapes are what I do best, and people seem to buy them more, anyway." He kept on painting in a lazy, half-involved way for the rest of the morning, every now and then letting his mind wander and his eyes survey the park.

At noon he cleaned his brushes and covered his oils. He stood up and stretched his tall thin body, then picked up his lunch bag and thermos and headed for the seat under an old oak on the side of the hill. The semi-circular brick wall that kept the land from sliding away from the tree was a perfect spot for looking down over the point, across the bayou, and farther into the bay. He often sketched up here in the heat of the day. As he finished his lunch and leaned back against the tree to smoke a cigarette, he saw three children running around the curve of the shore and down to the point. When they spotted his easel, canvases and paints, they ran over to inspect them. Today he had brought with him many of his paintings

of houses, so that he could touch them up before the yearly art exhibit around the park fountain. He hoped that the children would not bother these, or drip water and dirt on them, but sure enough, after briefly looking at his unfinished painting, they grabbed the canvases propped against the easel and began flipping through them. The two boys did not look for long, but the girl stayed awhile and studied the pictures. He saw her comparing them with the houses across the bayou; then she quickly put them back by the easel and ran to join her friends. As he watched the three frolic down the beach, Mark thought about the way they had looked at his paintings: the two boys had quickly glanced over them, and the girl who stayed a little after her friends left, had showed no sign of interest other than comparing his houses with the real ones. Several people had taken his work this way. He remembered a conversation with an old man who had stopped, on Wednesday, to watch him paint.

"Been seein' you workin' down here for several days, young man. What you workin' on?"

"I'm doing a few landscapes of those houses across the bayou."

"Oh, yeh! Beautiful homes over there; pretty scenery too. You picked a good spot! Looks like you're paintin' Doc Barreneau's house now; looks just like it—even those bushes in the same place. You one of those fellers that go 'round paintin' pictures of peoples' houses for 'em? We have one of our plantation in Mississippi someone painted 'fore we moved. Been in the family for seventy-six years,—that plantation,—but couldn't keep it up! We paid right much for that paintin'. Seems like you could make a fair living that way; better than a regular artist!"

"No, that's not the kind of artist I am," he had answered, annoyed at the stooped old man,—"no one's asked me to paint their house; I'm doing these for the exhibit. It's a kind of painting called landscape painting."

"Oh, yeh, that's right." The old man raised his thick, white eyebrows and looked blankly across the bayou. "Well, you're doin' good work there, young man! Hope you sell some at the exhibit!" he said, as he strolled off.

Mark crumpled his paper bag and jumped down from his seat under the oak. He walked back to his chair thinking about the old man not knowing anything about art, and probably just trying to make conversation. Soon after he began painting he heard the shouts of children running toward

him. Looking around he saw the same three kids, this time with a wet, sandy cocker following along beside them. Again they stopped to watch him.

"Did you do all these, mister?" the chubby, brown-headed boy asked.

"Yes."

"We looked at them a little while ago: I hope you didn't mind." The freckled-faced girl reached down to hold the dog.

"Do you always paint houses?" asked the first little boy.

"Yes, that's what I do best." Mark leaned down for another brush. "But I do have a few things besides houses in that folder over there."

"My aunt used to paint all kinds of things. She left me a big picture of two cowboys on horses that she painted out in Texas! Can we look in your folder?"

"Yes, if you'd like,—but be careful with them!" Mark smiled and turned around to watch the children as they raced over to the tree. "I think the first one is sketches and paintings of houses,—so try the second one!" he called.

The children plopped down, feet straight in front of them, and spread the folder over their laps. Any picture of a house was quickly passed over, but when they came to a landscape he had painted further down the park, where the bayou went into an inlet, they stopped. It was the painting he had done impulsively one day because the scene had been vivid and had seemed to demand his recording it. It was very simple—two couples being rowed by a colored man out of the bayou's inlet and out from under some large oaks which lightly swept the surface of the water, into a sunlit place.

"I like *this* one!" exclaimed the intent little girl.

"Me too!" cried both boys. They put that painting on top and continued looking through the other drawings of houses. After they finished, they came back to watch Mark paint. The boys, catching sight of some ducks, soon ran off yelling, "Thank you, mister!" But again the girl stayed beside him.

"Gosh, you paint those houses just like they look! That must be *hard!*"

Modestly, Mark answered, "No, anyone can paint like this if they just try hard enough. *You* should try sometime! It's just a matter of correct proportions."

"How did you learn, though?"

"Well . . . ," he hesitated, "I've had a lot of practice drawing and painting houses. All it takes is hard work and practice."

From down the shore the chubby boy called, "Come on, Marcia! We've got to go *home!*" She quickly thanked Mark and ran off.

Mark stayed fairly late that afternoon finishing his painting, and touching up some of the old ones. When he looked through them all, to decide which of the many sketches, water colors, and oils he wanted to exhibit, he came to the canvas the children had liked so well. Mark studied it for a moment; it was one he had experimented on. "And it really isn't very good," he thought. "My others are so much better!" He put it at the bottom of the stack.

Next day Mark took about twenty of his choice paintings and drawings to the showing. Many artists, mostly amateurs, had set up their displays on the sidewalk around the great circular fountain. The day was sunny and gay, and Mark found a place between a middle-aged man with seascapes and a few random drawings, and a young woman with mostly impressionistic work to show. Both people had a nice selection of paintings, and several observers were already gathered around, and asking the two artists their prices.

Mark hurriedly put up his exhibit and sat back to wait. People began to stop over a few of his paintings, but usually just glanced as they walked by. After sitting for several hours, Mark decided to look over the other exhibits. He walked down the sidewalk lined with oaks that occasionally filtered in the bright sunlight, and saw the variety of styles and subjects on view: realistic, modernistic, still lifes, portraits, abstracts, street scenes from the French Quarter, and even farm scenes. Some of the artists were doing well, and several others had sold one or two pieces. Mark walked back to his place, with the increasing crowd.

As he came to his own display he overheard a man and a woman who had stopped there.

"Oh, honey! Isn't that a quaint old house? I *like* it,—don't you?"

"Well, yes; it's O.K. It seems to be too fixed or measured . . . or I don't know exactly what it is; it looks just—too—impersonal. But if you like it . . ."

"No, no; I see what you mean, but it *is* a fine old house! There used to be an old English house near us that always fascinated me and . . ."

The couple walked on, and Mark sat down more disheartened than before. The afternoon passed in much the same way the morning had. But about four, a well-dressed, elderly lady stirred him from his trance.

"How much is this painting here, young man?"

Mark hopped up and went over to her. "Oh, why, that's . . . let me see . . ."

"That's *my* house you know! You've done a good job in painting it—looks just like that! I've always wanted someone to paint that old house before some of our children or grandchildren decide it ought to be remodeled,—when they get hold of it!"

"Oh, is that your house?" Mark disappointedly asked.

"Why yes! It's the one across the bayou, isn't it?"

"Yes ma'am." His voice dropped and he stared at the painting in his hand. "In that case, I'd like to give it to you."

"Well . . . *thank* you, young man! It's a lovely painting. I'm going right home and put it up!" Mark managed a weak smile as the lady bustled away.

Immediately he began packing up his canvases and then, with his folder under his arm, headed down to the point. He did not know how long he sat there. The late afternoon sky was still light, but most of the swimmers and skiers had gone home. He reached for the folder, pulled out all his paintings and sketches, and began tearing them up one by one. At the bottom of the stack he stopped. There was the painting the children had liked so much. After looking at it for a few minutes he slipped it back into place, leaned against the tree, and pulled out a cigarette.

Signet 24

Return To Montmartre

The purple shadow of *Sacre-Coeur*
Deepens among the crowds that walk
Up the steps to a better view of the city.
For all they say of atmosphere,
Waving postcards as they talk,
It would not take them long to pity
"Those picturesque artists" on Tertre Square
If they stayed there. Let them lock
Their taxi-doors and go for good.

I shall ignore a guide who raves
About the beauty of the stone;
Utrillo knew how the sunlight slid
Down over the walls in steady waves
Till they were smooth and light as bone—
Like bones I saw by an amethyst sea,
Bleached and totally separate
From the living thing they once had been.
In front of the weightless filigree
I shall consider Sacred Heart,
And I shall pretend I came alone.

SHERYL OWENS

The Art Gallery

The people come and go
Yet they speak not of Michelangelo
They point with painted nails
And patter with careless feet.
The people come and go
As the walls wonder
"Will they ever know?"
The stiletto heels clickety-click
On the polished marble floor—which asks
"Will they ever come back?"

JO LEARNED

The Good Deed

A little bug fell out of her hair,
And the lady gave a startled stare:
"How can anyone live in such dirt?"
And then, not meaning to be curt,
She took the child and washed her hair
And scrubbed her till her skin was fair.
Then the lady thought she'd done her duty:
The little girl turned out a beauty—
Except that she no longer smiled.
The lady looked at the pretty child
But didn't notice that she cried.
The lady hadn't thought of pride.

ROSE MITCHELL

". . . & Sons"

Lydia Alexander

The afternoon was thick with heat and dust,—not unbearable, but warm enough to keep most of the town folks back in their houses. Occasionally a storekeeper would venture out under his striped awning for a swipe at the accumulated clay around his door, or the Western Union boy would run down the street at a half-gait—rush service, tempered with a little respect for the weather—but, mostly, the walks were as bare as the creek bottom. No sense stirring about in the heat of the day, making a fuss over something that could just as well be tended to in the cooler evening.

Solomon understood this, being the lackadaisical sort of fellow he was, and saw these quiet expanses of time in a work day as part of the job, giving him the opportunity to rearrange stock, rewrap the bolts of cloth and trimmings the ladies invariably left awry, and give his books a few

satisfied glances. No one in town kept a better set of records, and few had the successful business he had, to make elaborate bookkeeping necessary, or a source of pride. *Finney & Sons* had been founded long before Solomon's parents were sure there would be a son, but Abe Finney thought the title had a ring of stability, so "& Sons" it was.

Sol had grown up in the business, and now, in his gray years, felt he'd had a hand in raising every kid in town, and most of their folks. There wasn't anything a family could need that *Finney & Sons* didn't offer, except for the produce Sally had for sale right across the street at her open air market. No point competing with cousins,—especially when a business with so many headaches anyway, and for so little profit, was the main consideration. Propping against the doorway, he felt a sigh settle through his body.

"Afternoon, Mr. Finney. Kinda quiet, huh?"

"Yep, Reuben—not many folks out this time 'a day, 'count 'a the heat an' all. Things'll pick up 'bout four when the sun starts goin' down and tobacco or salts or somethin' gets to be more important than a nap. What you doin' about?"

"My ole man wants some grease from Mr. Holland—to put on the pump. Reckon you could gimme credit, Sir—'bout a nickel's worth?" Reuben kicked a little dust over a beetle trying frantically to get off its back, then ground it into the dirt with his clay-coated brogan. "A bag o' them marshmeller peanuts 'd be mighty fine, Sir."

The two went in for the purchase, and Solomon handled the boy's transaction with the same careful attention he'd have given to his finest customer: good business to keep these potential buyers coming, he reckoned. Reuben sauntered toward the door, then turned around.

"Say, you know Miz Hawkin's cat—that big yeller one? He had six kittens this morning!"

"You don't say!"

"Yep. Well, thank ya, Mr. Finney. Be seein' ya."

Solomon walked to the back of the store, collected some rags and a whisk broom, then returned to his windows where he carefully polished

off every finger smudge, giving special attention to the red letters outlined in black,—*Finney & Sons*. Solomon rarely allowed himself to indulge in self-pity, but as he brushed the dust and bugs out of the window showcase, he was painfully conscious of the fact that *Finney & Sons* stopped with him—no heirs, no family.

"Oh well, make the best of this life," he mused, "and let the rest of the world look after themselves." So, he pushed the sliding bifocals further back on his nose, ran his fingers through his thin hair, and tapped the belt that just barely encircled the baywindow he'd acquired—from good living, some thought, while others thought he was just puffed out with pride.

The little Japanese bell over the doorway, tinkling with a sudden wisp of air, quickly dispelled his preoccupation, and Solomon looked up. "Come on in. Anything I can do for you?"

The boy was a well-worn seventeen, he supposed,—a bit on the lean side, with long thin arms, knobby knuckles, and too much hair over his sweaty forehead. His faded bluejeans hung from prominent hip bones, and he wore a feed-sacking shirt, and mud-encrusted boots. He looked sort of like he'd been hung out on a line to dry.

"Yeah. You got any work?"

"Wish I did, son, but you can see there ain't hardly a soul stirring here. Heat keeps 'em in. Business really ain't enough to keep me busy. You not from these parts, are you?"

"No sir,—just need the money. Been up the road without much luck. Sure you can't use me? I need the money awful bad."

"Nope, son, just don't believe I can. Sorry's I can be, though. How much education you got behind you?"

"Little readin' an' cipherin' . . . but I'm a hard worker!—Please, mister?"

Solomon wasn't unsympathetic, but he remained firm. "I'll tell you what. Take them boxes out back in the storeroom out to the trash heap and burn 'em, and I'll give you your dinner."

"But, mister, I need the *money*. I gotta have a *job*!"

"That's the best I can do, son." Solomon began to walk toward the storeroom. Turning around at the doorway to see if the boy was following, he found himself suddenly faced by a gun. The boy was holding it close,—a little timidly, but with his finger right on the trigger. Sol stopped in the strange silence, a quiver running through his heart. Then, almost immediately, he walked toward the boy, hand extended.

"*Well,* boy,—why didn't you say you had a gun to sell me if you were wantin' money? See here,—the collection I've got?" He made a gesture toward a wall rack of pistols and shotguns. "Land sakes, I'd a bought a fine piece like that in a minute if you'd a tole me you had it! What's your price? Forty-five? Fifty? I'll give you fifty for it, clean sale. What you say?"

The boy stood frozen for a minute, looked hard at the barrel of the gun, then raised his eyes and stretched his arm, gun barrel first, toward Solomon, who showed none of the flinches shaking his body.

"O—okay, mister. Fifty'll do." And he slipped his finger from the trigger.

The storekeeper hurriedly took the money from his cash box and exchanged it for the gun. "Hope this'll be enough to take care of whatever you were needin' money for. Be a shame for a nice young feller like you to come to a bad end for want of money!"

With that, the boy lurched away, and had left nothing but dust sifting through the air by the time Solomon reached the door. He stood there for some time, swatting the gnats away with one hand, and hanging onto the transom above with the other.

A figure moved up the street gradually, and nodded in recognition as he ambled closer to Solomon.

"Afternoon, Cal, how's it goin'?"

"Just fair to middlin', Sol. How 'bout you? Know anything worth knowing?"

"Nope—not a thing. 'Cept Miz Hawkin's big cat just had six kittens!"

Observation

He seems to walk on shadows, not on grass,
Yet carrying a weight of thought like one
Who merely nods to seasons as they pass
But holds their answers upward to the sun,
Asking as much as the color each one shows
To know how the color came and where it has been.
Maybe some people wonder if he knows
That air is all there is for breathing in.

Perhaps the air is thinner where they are,
Or else some questions in them have been deferred
So long they scarcely recollect their care,
But assume what answers they need from what they've heard,
And sum up his presence with phrases come easy to hand
And a tolerant smile for someone they don't understand.

SHERYL OWENS

The Coin

Cathy Davis

Alice Conway was in her early forties; a pretty woman with a warm face almost beautiful when she smiled. She was the mother of two children, a girl and a younger boy, and the wife of a very busy man who was a success, and constantly "going off on another deal."

Alice seemed to bubble over with curiosity: always looking for something, noticing and questioning. She was especially attracted to anything old or mysterious, and could easily spend an entire afternoon in any antique shop, or see a glitter on the walk and be impelled to investigate and find out what it might be. Usually, though, she was disappointed.

Her family seemed to be lacking in the enthusiasm which filled her—even somehow to stifle it. Not that they were nasty or rude: they simply didn't take her seriously, and she often felt isolated from them. She couldn't share new experiences or interests with the polite but sadly impatient attention that she was given. After a while, though, she just accepted it, and began to keep more things to herself. After all, her children had their growing up to do, and her husband had his business to worry about.

This summer for the first time, the Conways had rented a small cottage near the beach. "Good to try something new for a change!" Mr. Conway had said, pleased with himself, and the acceptance of his decision; but Alice had been secretly pushing for it for a long time, because of the mysterious ocean that had always drawn her to it,—although she had given in before when the others had wanted to go somewhere else.

They planned to stay only about five days. After packing and getting everything settled, they finally made the long drive and got to the house they had rented at the beach.

The very first day, Alice's son found some boys his own age, and began to spend most of his time with them, while her daughter was content to lie in the sun—all she wanted was to be tan when they went back home!

Alice and her husband would talk—when he wasn't fishing. But all of them were occupied and content with their own amusements . . . except for Alice, who got restless just sitting. She wasn't satisfied lying in the sun, or watching her boy playing ball with his friends, or her husband reading or fishing: each of them unaware of the secrets kept by the place around them, while she was filled with the beauty and vastness of the sea, and with the desire to explore it. So she began taking long walks alone, or shopping in the little beachy stores nearby.

Then, one day, she learned of a legend connected with a small section of beach not far away—stumbled across it in one of the tiny curio shops, in a quaint booklet telling the story . . .

It seems that many years ago, hundreds of years, a certain ship set sail from Spain, its planned destination unknown. She looked at the picture of a magnificent ship with full sails and a grand figurehead, sailing on calm blue water. The booklet related how the departure had been fine, and the weather perfect, but that the great vessel had not reached port. Nobody ever knew why, though many reasons had been suggested, and the ship was never found. It had been carrying, the book told, a Spanish duke of wide renown, and his new bride, and was filled with riches. In spite of extensive searches, the tragedy had been pushed into the background and forgotten—but only for a while, because one spring, following an unusually wet and stormy winter, someone happened to report that he had found on the ravaged beach a suspicious looking object . . . some kind of coin or medal. Though the picture and date were worn almost completely off, it was identified as a Spanish coin that could have come from no place but the ship that had been lost so long before. At last the winter and the tides had brought in this much evidence. Such a find would be worth something, and the man sold it.

Soon, reports began to come in here and there of other worn pieces of money, all from a certain section of the beach. Renewed search for any remains of the lost Spanish ship again revealed nothing. But the wreck seemed to be the only explanation for these coins, the value of which drew many hunters to a place that came to be referred to as Coin Beach.

Closing the little booklet, Alice showed the expression that always came when she got excited over something new: a distant, scheming kind of

look, in which the rest of the world was completely shut out from her train of thought. She forgot about exploring the rest of the shop, and went back to the house as quickly as she could, thinking and planning as she went . . . Coin Beach was only about ten minutes from where they were staying.

Back at the house, her news was met with the usual reaction: her husband's well known "I'd like to hear about it, dear, but . . ."; this time he was just leaving to go look at some boats. The children were busy with their own plans . . . "Tell us about it later!" they said, kindly.

But Alice didn't even get disappointed much any more. She had become used to this absence of curiosity about anything that did not involve matters of the day for her family, so wrapped up in their own concerns. The only interest she roused had come when she mentioned that the coins were worth money; but even that was not enough to make anyone want to go with her early the next day to search the beach—so she said no more about it.

The next morning Alice began what was to become almost a ritual for her during the remaining few days. In the chilly dampness of six o'clock in the morning, she quietly got up and dressed quickly, because of the cold, in warm slacks, an old sweater, and a sweatshirt. Then she tiptoed into the kitchen, made hot coffee and filled the huge thermos. She picked up the boots and parka she had laid out the night before, and went outside.

A hint of what the coming day would be like showed in an early morning glare. The sky was clear and gulls flew overhead, heightening her spirits. Alice followed the directions she had copied from the booklet, to Coin Beach. A funny little expanse of seashore, it was partly closed on each side by large rocks; and the sand was very fine, revealing bleached white fish bones and crab shells which had been washed up, broken and smoothed. Alice began her search, walking up and down the beach close to the water, then moving back. She found many shells: mostly small ones with a touch of pink on one side—but nothing that even resembled a coin. Once or twice she saw something that looked promising, but each time it turned out to be only a bottle cap. She came away with numerous small treasures of driftwood and shells.

But Alice kept on looking for three more days and getting pleasure, anyway, just from going to the special beach, early, before anyone else was out. Every morning she would look out across the ocean and think of that great Spanish ship, and wonder. It didn't really matter about the coins—just being there with the mystery of the legend all around, and the ocean itself, was enough for her now. She thought of the next day, when she would have to leave, and felt as if she were about to lose something precious—something she could not share even with those closest to her. But for now, while she was on the shore, she was content.

The last morning, Alice awoke earlier than before; it was still quite dark. She got up, dressed, fixed coffee as usual, and went out into a thick drizzle —almost like fog, and heavy with smell of the sea—and drove straight to Coin Beach. As she neared the water, the smell became stronger; and the waves had a hollow sound as they thudded on the beach. There had been a storm the night before, though Alice did not remember hearing it. The wet sand was strewn with sticks and jagged pieces of wood, old rusty cans and bits of glass, and bunches of soggy yellow seaweed in piles all around, with more of the delicate pink and white shells everywhere she turned. She stood, unconsciously shivering a little, and breathed in deeply. She loved this place—had always loved any beach; but this one was special.

Alice began her walk along the water's edge, stepping in the foam as the waves came in, looking with fascination at the collection of things washed up. Then she gave a start as she almost stepped on a rusty looking object sticking out of the sand as the water receded. Reaching down, she snatched it up before the tide could reclaim it,—and it *was* a coin!—half worn away, nearly paper thin, but no mistaking it. She could see the partially indistinct outline of a figure on one side. It was rough and gritty in her fingers . . . and so very old. Her hands were trembling as she moved it from one to the other.

Spellbound by sudden thought of the wrecked ship, and the token, from that same ship, that was now hers, she turned to the sea once more, then left the beach for the last time, and went back to the house. The rest of the family were waking up; the sun was beginning to glow through the mist left from the night before. Just as she went to the sink to wash off her treasure, her son came into the kitchen.

"She's been at it again!" he called out to the others, as he noticed her outfit and wet hair.

The other two walked sleepily into the room: "Well, what did you find *this* time—anything special?"

"No,—nothing *special*," she answered.

The Tea Party

The ladies preen and pose
On cramped feet with pointed toes.
They babble and chatter
As their teacups clatter.
The world seems to shatter—
And there they are swimming—yet almost
Drowning in their little cups of self.

JO LEARNED

The Remnant Table

Pretty color bright
Muted color dull
Snatched and being torn by the
Fierce passionate flow.
"Rich lady thin
Poor lady fat
Choose me, buy me, take me away!"
Begone pretty color bright—
Stay and keep them company
Muted color dull.

JO LEARNED

A Recall of Heroism

Sheryl Owens

> I was in the army as a civilian-in-transit. It was my civilian sense, and still is, that I had paid off my end of the social contract, at least for that day, in putting my civilian hide on the line. My dues thus paid, I was under no moral compulsion to take officers, or the army, at their own evaluation of the social order. What's whiskey for one is whiskey for all.
>
> —John Ciardi[1]

Laws, as someone remarked recently, are made for the times they are called into question; they are not a decoration of order but a strategy against disorder. Robert Jordan, in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* had his own code. He was a man of preparation; an absolutist who acted on principles he had found out, while realizing that there are as few free (uncompound) elements in the human spirit as in the earth. "I've known many killers in this war and some before and they were all different; there is no common trait or feature; not any such thing as the criminal type."[2]

1 John Ciardi, "Manner of Speaking," *Saturday Review* (January 18, 1963), p. 8.
2 Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (New York, 1940), p. 211. All of the following quotations from Hemingway are from this edition.

Jordan's practice was exact obedience to command ("'That is all I have to know,' Golz said. 'That nothing comes up over the bridge. That is absolute.' 'I understand.'") and rigorous control of emotion: "'Take it easy,' he told himself. 'Don't get into a rage. That's just a way out too . . . You've got to bite on the nail now . . . Wait until the fight before you get angry. There's lots of time for it in a fight. It will be some use to you in a fight.'" He was a reasonable man who, once he had made a decision, kept by it until something more than his particular circumstance changed it. "Should a man carry out impossible orders knowing what they lead to? . . . Yes. He should carry them out because it is only in the performing of them that they can prove to be impossible . . . If everyone said orders were impossible to carry out when they were received where would you be?"

Robert Jordan "did not give any importance to what happened to himself" so long as his obligations were fulfilled, not because he did not care for his life but because he cared more for something else: "You felt that you were taking part in a crusade. That was the only word for it although it was a word that had been so worn and abused that it no longer gave its true meaning . . . you fought that summer and that fall for all the poor in the world, against all tyranny, for all the things you believed and for the new world you had been educated into." He was not grim, and he entertained no disillusions: "We are not alone. We are all together." He was proud of what he had accomplished and glad for the test of his strength—"Each man retained now, better than any citation or decoration, the knowledge of just how he would act when everything looked lost."

Robert Jordan was a man of action as well as words, and he saw others through their actions. Standing over the body of Anselmo after the blowing of the bridge, Roberto thought how very small it looked for all the Old One had carried. Rivers aren't big at their sources; it's what happens later on that counts—and so too of men. Heroism is a real event, not in people's trailing clouds of glory from heaven . . . but, for instance, in a person's being a matador even if he is too short. Jordan was gentle as only strong people can be, without fear: "No one has touched thee," and "I go with thee," he says to Maria, for the healing of her spirit. The good life is not defined by years or by pleasures, but by what a man does in the time

he has—a time such as Fred describes in Frost's *West-Running Brook*,[3] or as Stanley Kunitz spoke of as "the hard and inescapable phenomenon that we are living and dying at the same time."[4]

Marcus Aurelius said:

> The true life [does not lie] in the subtleties of logic, or in wealth or fame or enjoyment, or anywhere. Where then is it to be found? In doing that which is the quest of man's nature. How then shall a man do this? By having axioms as the source of his impulse and actions. What axioms? On the nature of Good and Evil, shewing that nothing is for man's good save what makes him just, temperate, manly, free . . .[5]

Robert Jordan's stoicism is something like that of Aurelius: a dog hitched to a cart (although, on our side of the metaphor, it would be a cart of his own choosing!) can either trot along without feeling the weight of the harness, or he can resist and be whipped by the nearest master. Jordan found his freedom in discipline—a freedom for the fight he himself chose.

In the article quoted at the beginning of this paper, Patrick Henry is cited by Mr. Ciardi in defense of the freedom he claimed to transport whiskey illegally during World War II, and in reply to a charge of treason.[6] But Patrick Henry in his "Liberty and Death" speech says: "The battle is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave,"[7] and no matter how Ciardi and his henchmen scored in this battle, they did not qualify in terms of honor as honor is understood by representative manhood. Supposedly they were defending the liberty, the honor, and the reputation of a country—yet Ciardi glowingly admits to accepting a bribe given to speed or make promotions; and though he says the officers doing the bribing did not profit at all by it, I wonder how much they lost in any example of integrity. It is Jordan's opinion that all good men should suffer for others, and that in order to do so, they will have to be honest in the first place.

The resemblance I see between Robert Jordan and Marcus Aurelius ends in the emotional commitments they make. Both are soldiers, both have put duty ahead of all else, but Jordan admits love for Maria, where Aurelius

3 Robert Frost, *Robert Frost's Poems* (Washington, 1963), p. 170.
4 Stanley Kunitz, *Queens College* lecture, March, 1963.
5 W. T. Jones, *A History of Philosophy* (New York, 1952), p. 282.
6 Ciardi, *op. cit.*
7 Patrick Henry, *The World's Great Speeches* (New York, 1942), p. 233.

withholds love from all but his legions. (Before an early morning attack Aurelius was told that his daughter had died at home. He said he was sorry, but that he had prepared himself for her death by never having loved her.[8]) Jordan is strong enough to love Maria and still to place duty first —or really to make it a part of his love. Similarly he has firm enough control of his actions to be able to examine his directive ideas without losing his practical position in the midst of the Spanish war.

For Whom the Bell Tolls is a recall of heroism. Jordan continued to act on principle, though he knew that neither of the warring parties was wholly right or wrong. "Any man's death diminishes me,"[9] seeing what man can become. And "the good is the chief enemy of the best."[10] Is it true, as Thucydides said, that "War is a teacher who educates through violence; and he makes men's characters fit their condition?"[11] Or is Pope right in saying

> Honor and shame from no Condition rise;
> Act well your part, there all the honour lies.[12]

Robert Jordan with a sense of responsibility a little like that of Oedipus, which would not plead ignorance or any excuse, was courageous when other men in the same conditions were not; he would not hold circumstance responsible for character or action, but insisted on finishing a task contracted for and well begun. At the end he refused to delay the others by his injury, sent Maria away, and stayed on duty to the death—and incidentally, Mr. Ciardi,—without any whiskey at all for his pain.

8 Dr. T. Buchanan Looney, lecture at *Queens College*, October 1963.
9 John Donne, *Sermons on the Psalms and Gospels*, ed. by Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkley, 1963), p. 243.
10 Gordon Keith Chalmers, "The Purpose of Learning," *Annuals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* (September 1955), p. 7.
11 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Chicago, 1948).
12 Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, Epistle IV (New Haven, 1963), p. 542, lines 193-194.

Love

The paradox called love
Is little known about:
When standing firm and true and sure—
It then creates most doubt.

KATHIE HALLOCK

Melissa

She kicked open the back door, walked down two steps and stopped abruptly. Then she grabbed a huge hunk of her straw colored hair, twisted it back from her forehead and clamped it down with a long, crooked barrette. She zipped up her bluejeans for the tenth time that day, and shuffled her raggy tennis shoes, trying to get her left little toe out of the hole it kept poking through. Finally, she crossed the back yard, bobbing her head to the usual beat of a weird tune she had composed in math class earlier in the day.

"What will she be like," thought her father, watching from a window, "at twenty-one?"

The little girl soon grew tired of dancing by herself, although she would have gone on and on if she had had an audience. So she climbed on the ivy-covered wall near the house, and without any warning, spread her arms and plunged forward, shouting, "Look at me! I'm a *flying Melissa!*"

Lying on the grass she soon discovered that her sister was under a tree near the garage deeply engrossed in a book. She crawled over to her and pounced. With her strong, tanned arms hugging the older girl tightly around the neck, she lined up with her eye to eye and nose to nose.

"Do you love me?!"

"Of course I love you, sillyhead—more than anything!"

"I just wanted to make sure."

She stood up, zipped her jeans and grinned, "This only makes the eleventh time today!"

Carole Cameron

Sonnet

"Je laissais tomber a terre ses paroles comme de pauvres ciseaux blessés."—Gide

In the bleak and frozen air I let your words
Hang, hovering for an instant in suspense—
Then carelessly I let them fall like birds,
Wounded, dead, shot with an arrow of silence.
Against the wall of my unheeding mind
You beat with many words that long suppressed
Were aching to be said. But I was blind
And did not see the tumult in your breast
Until your secret thoughts rose to proclaim
Themselves like birds through winter's greying sky
And I, with silence, killed them as they came,
There, in a quiet agony, to die.
And I, in silence killing your words, killed you,
For there I stood—mute—and a cold wind blew.

ELIZABETH ANN KERR

L. Tannhauser

Snow

A shimmer not quite real:
A ghost-like glow, denying truth.
I seem to be evasive like the snow—
Covering up my faults and fears and failures.

So simple to hide, to disguise yourself
In a lacy network of white;
To make yourself appear as lovely and elusive as the flakes
Which cover all the world; disguising,
Yet chilling, even killing weakness.

And we are weak—
We who dare not even to dare,
And dare not admit even our desire to dare.
Catering to the caprices of the crowd,
We sink into the safety of oblivion.

And so we covet the snow: a cloak
Which safely conceals our own fallibility.

MARY LOU CONNER

The Yellow Jackets' Nest

Martha Winders

"Look at the way he wiggles his nose!" Ann cried. She tiptoed on the narrow rail that went around the edge of the wooden tent floor, and peeped under a canvas flap on top of the tent. "Oh, a little bit of his ear is torn off."

"Hurry up, Ann, so *I* can see!" Judy called. "Have they built a nest?"

"Yep, and it's made out of chewed up tent too, just like Miss Margaret said it'd be."

"Let *me* see," Judy called again.

Ann reluctantly crawled down. "It's looking over the top of the nest. I don't think the nest is finished yet. See,—one side's lower than the other."

"Oh, isn't he cute!" Judy exclaimed. "Let's keep 'im as our tent mascot,—and don't knock the nest off! Poor little mouse doesn't know it's not supposed to eat tents. He's just getting stuff for his house!"

"O.K., we can have some pets. We'll tell 'em we don't have any on *our* tent."

They started up the rocky dirt path, being careful to step over the bare tree roots.

"Hey look!" Ann cried, "Some yellow jackets are building a nest on that little tree!"

"Gosh, it looks like a hornet's nest. I thought yellow jackets lived in the ground!"

"Yeah, but maybe they're trying something new!"

Ann went close to the tree, and gazed intently at the nest, her brown hair falling into her face. "It looks like it's made of grey paper stuff. I've never seen one this close. I wonder where they lived before they came here, and why they moved? If we could find their old nest, wouldn't that be great!"

"Oh, yes!"

They went on down to the counselors' tent. "Where have you-all been?" asked Alice, the head counselor. She peered at them through her thick, horn-rimmed glasses, her mouth puckering, like a fish's.

"We found a yellow jackets' nest right off the path!" Judy answered.

"You stay away from it! Somebody might get stung! Now, none of you go *near* that nest. Do you hear?"

Ann twisted her mouth to one side, glaring at Alice.

"Hey Alice,—oh A-lice!" Christine came lumbering down the hill, the huge lower part of her body wagging from side to side. "*We* had mice on top of our tent, and *I* shook 'em off!" Her aloof smile made her fat face look heavier, and her tight upper lip made the nostrils in her turned up nose look larger.

"Very good, Christine!" Alice smiled. "You always do a good job. Do any of the rest of you have mice?" Nobody answered.

Ann watched Stoney and Susan coming up the hill from flag ceremony practice. "Hurry, girls!" Alice called. "We're going to have a meeting. Sit down in front of the tent." Susan and Stoney slid in by Judy and Ann.

"Listen," said Alice, "our end-of-camp activity is going to be a fair. Everybody should collect rocks or leaves or something and mount them and enter it. And everybody has to enter *something*. Now you can go back to your tents and think. And don't bother me for ideas for a while! I have to write some letters. We have to have an entry from the whole unit,—so be thinking about that, too!"

"Come on," Ann whispered to Susan and Stoney, "We've got something to show you."

They started up the path, and Jane and Mary joined in. "Hey, where's the nest you said you found? Can we see it?"

"Sure," Judy answered, "but we better be careful. Alice might catch us. There it is." They all crowded around the tree, backing off whenever a yellow jacket came in.

"I'm going to tell! Alice said not to go *near* the nest, and I'm going to tell!" Christine chanted, as she tried to look through the circle.

"Just go ahead and tell, then! Anybody that looks like a pig *would* be a tattle-tale!" Susan yelled at Christine.

"Yeah!" Ann said, "and you shook the poor little mice off of your tent and ruined their nest! They don't *know* any better than to build on a tent!"

"Well, Alice told me to."

"Well, you don't have to do everything Alice *tells* you!" Judy boiled. "Sometimes you have to think about *other* things—like a poor little mouse!"

"Yeah, Chris-tine!" everybody chimed in.

"Do *you* have mice on your tent?" Christine asked, planting her feet firmly on the ground. "I'll tell Alice that too!"

"We don't have *any* mice on our tent,—so you just go ahead and tell Alice that, and then you'll be a liar, too!"

"Come on, you-all! Let's go. I don't want to be around *her!*" Susan said.

They walked away, frowning back at Christine who was looking at the nest. "You know," Ann said, "I wonder what Christine's mother thought when she had a baby that looked like a pig?"

"Boy, I'd trade *her* in!" Susan replied. "Oh, guess what we're having for supper—white worms!"

"Ugh, not again!"

"Yeah, I'm *starving* up here, 'cause all we ever eat is white worms an' apple butter. I wrote my mama today to mail us some food, and *hide* it, inside, so they wouldn't take it away when we opened packages in front of them. I *told* her we're *starving*!!"

"Oh, good!"

"Hey, I've got an idea! Why don't we get the yellow jackets' nest and

enter it in the fair!" Ann exclaimed. "I bet *nobody* else will have one of those!"

"YES!"

"We can get one of those big cans that apple butter comes in, and hold it over the nest and cut the branch while one of us pours alcohol in the can. I have a whole bottle of alcohol!"

"Oh, boy!" cried Susan.

"Let's wait a few days though, to make sure they're through building. Come on Susan, you have to see our mice!"

Within the week, Ann, Susan, and Judy slipped up to the yellow jackets' nest with a knife, the bottle of alcohol, and a large can. Ann put the can over the nest and clamped the top on it firmly, leaving an opening only where the narrow limb came out. Judy began cutting furiously, and Susan kept the part around the opening saturated with alcohol. "Hurry, Judy! They're getting *out*!" Susan shouted, as the hum in the can got louder and louder. "Oh, *No!* Here comes Christ*ine!*"

"What are you doing?" asked Christine. "Ouch! *Ouch!* Get it off! It's *stinging* me!"

"Well go away then, if they're stinging you," Susan yelled. "It's just because *they* don't like you *either!*"

Christine ran down the path crying. "It's cut through!" Judy cried. Susan emptied the rest of the alcohol in the can, and Ann carried it back to the tent.

Ann set the can down carefully and opened the top. The yellow jackets were floating in alcohol in the bottom of the can. Ann took the nest, and set it on an orange-crate shelf to dry.

"*Uh*-oh,—here comes Alice and Christine," Susan whispered.

"Girls, I told you to stay away from that nest! Christine got stung!"

"We're going to enter it in the fair," Ann said, her brown eyes getting large.

"Well, now that you have it, I guess I can't do anything about it—but don't do it again," she said vaguely, as she left.

"How does she expect us to do it *again,* anyway?" Susan said.

Ann woke up first the next morning, and looked over at the nest, "What happened to our nest? Judy, Susan,—see?"

Half of the nest had disappeared, and the remaining half was tattered

and frayed around the edges. Susan looked blank. Judy jumped out of bed, and ran over to the nest. "Oh . . . there's mouse doo-doo on the crate! The mice ate it I bet!"

"They must have used it for their nests!" Ann cried. "Give me the broom. Boy, we'll show them not to go around eating our nest. We were just being nice to leave them there in the first place!"

Ann climbed up on the rail again, and holding the handle of the broom, slid it across the tent top, knocking the nest off. "There's a mouse!" She cried. She caught it under the straw of the broom as it tried to scamper up the roof, and sent it sailing through the air. It hit a tree and fell to the ground, lay there a minute and then scampered off.

"I hate mice!" Judy said, examining the torn nest.

"Me too!" Susan exclaimed.

About two days later the unit went on a hike. As they were coming back into camp Susan said, "Hey look, a dead mouse!" The mouse lay on his side. Susan picked him up by the tail. "He's stiff! Christine, I bet he's the mouse you knocked off your tent. You killed him!"

Christine grew pale, and her lower lip trembled.

"Christine, can't you do *anything* right? Golly Christine, you sure do mess things up! Poor little mouse!"

Ann went closer and looked at the mouse. She glanced at Judy, and their eyes met. The mouse had a nicked ear. They kept quiet, and dropped to the back of the line.

"We'll have to have a camp funeral," Susan said, "and boy, Christine, you'd better pray for forgiveness. You killed!"

"Should we tell them?" Ann whispered to Judy.

"Don't you dare!" Judy replied.

They started walking back to their tent. "Maybe we ought to be nice to Christine," Ann said. "She really can't help it if she looks like a pig."

"Yeah, maybe we ought to ask her to be our swimming buddy tomorrow," Judy answered.

A Would-Have-Been

Of all this ink that spilled across the floor
You might have strung a million words or more,
Taut lines to shake the world with grace and power—
Or so you say, and curse the withdrawing hour
Of Fate or Nature's last sardonic bow
Not even your anger makes impressive now.

SHERYL OWENS

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